

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
MINUTES

May 11, 2010

PRESENT: Mayor Peter Kelly
Deputy Mayor Brad Johns
Councillors: Steve Streach
Barry Dalrymple
David Hendsbee
Lorelei Nicoll
Gloria McCluskey
Darren Fisher
Bill Karsten
Jackie Barkhouse
Jim Smith
Mary Wile
Jerry Blumenthal
Dawn Sloane
Sue Uteck
Jennifer Watts
Russell Walker
Debbie Hum
Linda Mosher
Robert Harvey
Tim Outhit
Peter Lund
Reg Rankin

REGRETS: Councillor: Stephen Adams

STAFF: Mr. Dan English, Chief Administrative Officer
Mr. Wayne Anstey, Acting Chief Administrative Officer
Mr. Martin Ward, Municipal Solicitor
Ms. Shawnee Gregory, Acting Municipal Clerk
Ms. Melody Campbell, Legislative Assistant

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 12:34 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - April 13, 2010

MOVED by Councillor McCluskey, seconded by Councillor Blumenthal, that the minutes of April 13, 2010, as presented, be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

3. ROUNDABOUTS: APPLICABILITY TO HRM ROADS

- A presentation, Roundabouts, Applicability to HRM Roads, was before Council.
- A staff report dated April 26, 2010 was before Council.

Mr. Taso Koutroulakis, Acting Manager, Traffic & Right of Way, Ms. Tanya Davis, Supervisor, Traffic Services, and Mr. Keith Boddy, Nova Scotia Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, provided the presentation to Council.

Following the presentation, discussion ensued among Council.

Mayor Kelly questioned whether staff has car accident data and car/pedestrian accident data on the four potential Peninsula roundabout sites. Ms. Davis advised that there is no accident data since 2006. She noted that from 2002-2006 there were approximately thirty to forty car accidents at the Willow Tree, with approximately five car to pedestrian accidents during the same timeframe. Mayor Kelly expressed concern regarding potential roundabouts in high pedestrian use areas, such as the Willow Tree intersection and Cogswell Street. He stated that with the high number of pedestrians crossing in these areas, it may cause vehicle backlogs. Mr. Koutroulakis advised that pedestrian and vehicle counts will be done during the review of each potential roundabout location. Mr. Ken Reashor, Acting Director of Transportation and Public Works, advised that roundabouts are safer for pedestrians, as they have lower crossing widths with a refuge in between each roadway.

Councillor Sloane advised Council that traffic counts have to be done in each area taking into consideration the number of students, seniors and disabled pedestrians. She expressed concern with roundabouts creating efficient vehicle travel, as residents may consider taking vehicles to the Peninsula instead of using public transit. She expressed her appreciation to increase green space, noting that the extra green space could be utilized for public art.

In response to a question raised by Councillor Hendsbee, Mr. Koutroulakis advised that issues such as, lane widths, green space maintenance, bike lanes, and Metro Transit express lanes, would be considered in the design phase of each roundabout. It was noted, in response to a question by the Councillor, that the Micmac Rotary cannot be compared to the modern day roundabout.

MOVED by Councillor Hum, seconded by Councillor Karsten, that Halifax Regional Council adopt in principle the use of modern roundabouts on Municipal roads where appropriate design guidelines and standards can be met.

Councillor Barkhouse entered the meeting at 1:28 p.m.

Councillor Hum suggested a potential roundabout location is at Larry Uteck Boulevard and the Lacewood area.

Councillor Smith entered the meeting at 1:30 p.m.

Councillor Blumenthal advised that he is not against the concept of a roundabout but raised concern relative to the thirty million dollar deficit that HRM now faces. He noted that vehicle speed has not slowed down at the Armdale Roundabout. He stated that the Novalea area in the North End has not had any fatalities in many years. He added that the Novalea intersection has high pedestrian traffic, with school children crossing four times a day, and a large number of seniors and disabled persons walking in the area. He questioned if there would be audible signals for the visually impaired. He recommended that HRM spend money on traffic lights and audible signals, instead of a roundabout, for the Novalea area.

Councillor Streach noted that the information from the Province indicates a 67% reduction in collisions and a decrease in carbon emissions in roundabout locations. He reminded Council that this motion is for HRM to adopt in principal, with no budget commitments at this time.

Councillor Watts advised that an increase in green space is beneficial, however, she stressed that HRM cannot lose more land on the Halifax Common to accommodate a roundabout. She added that multiple lanes would not be beneficial to pedestrians. She suggested that a queuing system be considered for the visually impaired. She requested that HRM staff consult with the Active Transportation Advisory Committee and the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities to receive input on their needs. She added that the Willow Tree intersection should not be the first area considered for a roundabout.

Councillor Harvey noted that approximately forty to fifty residents attended a recent public meeting in Sackville. He added that all of these people were uncertain about

roundabouts, however, at the end of the meeting, the vast majority saw the benefits of a roundabout. In response to a question by the Councillor, Mr. Reashor advised that the first roundabout will move forward in the next year or two noting that the Willow Tree intersection will not be the first area for consideration.

Councillor McCluskey expressed concern regarding the costs associated with the roundabout implementation. In response to a question regarding winter maintenance, Mr. Boddy advised that snow plow drivers do not have to reverse in roundabouts as they do in intersections making plowing in roundabouts easier.

In response to questions posed by Councillor Wile, Mr. Koutroulakis advised that pedestrian access, snow removal, emergency vehicle access, disability access, and education requirements will be considered during the design process. He stated that crosswalks are back two vehicle lengths from the roundabout circle. He added that there are currently a couple of projects relating to the visually impaired at roundabouts, adding that HRM staff will receive recommendations upon project completion.

Councillor Mosher advised that there has been a reduction in traffic accidents since the introduction of the Armdale Roundabout. She noted that residents adapted well to the changes following improvements to the Armdale Roundabout and that she has received 99% positive feedback on these improvements. She added that some roundabouts, including the Armdale Roundabout, may need signals during morning and afternoon peak traffic periods to prevent pedestrian and vehicle backups.

In response to a query by Councillor Lund, Mr. Reashor advised that decisions on the roundabout locations and project timing will be based on budget and priority status.

Councillor Walker questioned what criteria is considered when developing a roundabout. He added that the Lacewood area, as a high traffic area with a significant accident history, should be considered as a roundabout location.

In response to a question by Councillor Uteck, staff advised that the feedback at the Armdale Roundabout indicates less traffic incidents.

In response to a query by Councillor Smith, Mr. Reashor advised that the Woodland Avenue area is under provincial jurisdiction, and that HRM staff are working with the province on a solution to the traffic issues at that location.

Councillor Blumenthal requested that staff provide Council with information on the following issues related to roundabouts:

- the cost of moving shelters and pads
- how roundabouts will effect bus services, including bus service for seniors
- how visually impaired pedestrians will be accommodated and any other accessibility issues that could arise

- costs related to property losses
- the number of accidents and fatalities at each intersection

Councillor Blumenthal advised that roundabout location consideration should first be given to high traffic intersections.

Councillor Watts requested that staff consider an analysis of the traffic patterns and volumes on resulting streets around the roundabout.

Councillor Nicoll requested staff provide a score sheet of vehicle wait times for each intersection that is under consideration for a roundabout.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Council recessed at 2:25 p.m.

Council reconvened at 2:38 p.m.

4. FINANCIAL REPORTING FOR TANGIBLE CAPITAL ASSETS

- A presentation “Financial Reporting Changes for Assets” was distributed to Council.

Ms. Pam Caswill, Manager, Corporate Reporting & Financial Policy, & Mr. Louis De Montbrun, Manager, Accounting Operations, provided the presentation, “Financial Reporting Changes for Assets, to Council.

Following the presentation, the following discussion ensued among Council:

- parkland dedication is included in the tangible assets
- land and a facility are considered two separate assets; owned land and the facility on the land
- the asset list will enable improved decision making for local governments
- HRM owned assets are on the list, ie: libraries, Sackville Sports Stadium, HRM owned recreation centres (managed by an outside entity)
- the Halifax Water Commission is listing its own tangible assets
- the list was compiled with assistance from HRM’s Transportation & Public, Works, Infrastructure & Asset Management, Community Development and HRM Management, Nova Scotia Land Registry and the Nova Scotia Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal
- at this point expenses for maintenance are not rated
- asset conditions will be considered on the fourth quarter report to Council
- there is no requirement to fund amortization recording assets in this manner does not affect tax rates
- HRM light standards are included in the Tangible Asset database

5. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:17 p.m.

Cathy Mellett
Acting Municipal Clerk